

however it swells out to a great breadth, forming a lofty and stupendous mountain-range, upon which rests the great mass of Ilve-tschimen.

July 10th. We now travelled south-east across soft, level ground, seldom undulating and then but slightly, and with an imperceptible slope towards the east-north-east. South of our route the predominating formation was *saj* with fine gravel; to the north *kamisch* grows, and the soil is just as soft and powdery as beside the Tarim. The *kamisch* is however rather scanty, and generally grows in small clumps. In all that soft material there is not a single chip of hard rock. There are a couple of smaller pools to the north-north-east and east-south-east of the lake. The middle of the steppe shows a broad depression, *Kasch-balghun*, the bottom of which is covered with gravel, while the steppe rises up on both sides in terraces. Here is *Sasik-jarning-baschi*, or the upper part of *Sasik-jar*, a dry ravine-like gully, $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 m. deep, and running N. 85° E. A few kilometers below our route springs gush out of the escarpments on both sides; below the gully they grow more numerous, and finally give rise to a brook, which makes its way to the *Ghas-nor*. The *Tschong-jar* (*Tschong-jarning-baschi*) possesses precisely the same characteristics as the gully just mentioned, but it is deeper and has an abundance of *kamisch* both in its bottom and at the sides; in the latter position too there is an abundant bush vegetation. The next gully or watercourse is called *Kulagh-jar* (*Kulagh-jarning-baschi*), with thick, vigorous reeds. After that we passed a small oblong pool, with clear though salt water, this also embowered amid luxuriant vegetation. At *Temirlik* (Camp VII; alt. 2961 m.) we had an opportunity to study the origin of these *jars* or «erosion gullies». The gully of *Temirlik* begins quite abruptly (fig. 31), for though it runs towards the north-east, there is no upper part coming down from the *Tschimen-tagh*. At its very start it is a deep hollow in the ground, from the side-terraces or *jars* of which springs gush out, their water speedily gathering into a little rippling brook, and this by its distant murmur showed that it soon swelled into a bigger torrent. The water at the springs had a temperature of 5.2° . Around them the grass was especially luxuriant. The brooks in the four gullies I have named gradually converge into one, and this is soon joined by several others, all coming from the south, and the whole eventually enters the *Ghas-nor*. These gullies thus carry water all the year round, right away from their very origin, the water issuing originally from the snow-fields of the *Tschimen-tagh*, though it is only here that it emerges into daylight. At *Temirlik* there are a couple of old Mongol dwellings, in which we found some small *tsakhas*, or cones of clay, which serve some sort of religious purpose. The district is sometimes visited for its good grazing by the *Tsajdam* Mongols, though they avoid as far as possible coming into contact with the *Muhamedans*.

In respect of climate these highlands showed a great difference in the course of only two days' journey. We found the *Akato-tagh* excessively dry and flat, there being only one spring, at its northern foot. The next parallel range on the south rises up a lofty and imposing mass, and its summits, sometimes rounded, sometimes pyramidal, were everywhere capped with snow, though this, as I subsequently learnt, melts away entirely during the summer. Thus the *Tschimen-tagh* arrests and condenses all the moisture which is brought thus far by the southerly winds, all the moisture, that is, that succeeds in getting over the yet higher range of the *Arka-*